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**NEWS From:**

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**Congressman Mike Honda**

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FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA

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## Honda Gives Bush a Failing Grade on Education After First 100 Days

**Washington DC**— Joined by House Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt (D-MO), Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) and the Democratic Members of the U.S. House and Senate, U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) today sharply criticized President Bush's performance on education after his first 100 days in office. As a former educator and member of the House Budget Committee, Honda continues to fight for increased funding for school construction and modernization and teacher training and recruitment— priorities that would get no funding under the Republican-backed Bush budget.

**"President Bush is correct that we must make our students and teachers more accountable— but what he does not seem to understand is that accountability in education is a two way street,"** said Honda. **"We cannot expect our schools to excel if we do not provide adequate funding to recruit, train and pay qualified teachers. We cannot expect our students to perform at 21<sup>st</sup> century levels if we do not provide them with 21<sup>st</sup> century technology and modernized classrooms."**

Honda first introduced his education budget proposal last month as a member of the House Budget Committee, as it debated the spending priorities for the United States for fiscal year 2002.

The Honda proposal, which was part of the Democratic budget, would have increased the maximum amount of the Pell Grant by \$600—to \$4,350 for 2002— by providing \$25.1 billion over the next ten years. Pell grants provide financial assistance to needy students so that they can attend college and are used by one in four post secondary students in the United States. The Bush budget only raises the maximum Pell Grant by \$150, **falling \$1.5 billion short of Bush's campaign promise to increase Pell Grant funding.**

Honda's proposal would also provide \$29 billion for teacher recruitment and training over the next ten years, including \$18.4 billion in new funding to provide supplemental pay to qualified teachers in high-poverty schools. Honda's proposal also secures \$10.6 billion to keep the Class Size Reduction Program on track by hiring 100,000 new teachers over seven years. The Bush budget provides **no funding for Class Size Reduction.**

The Honda proposal provides for a tax credit to pay the interest on almost \$25 billion in bonds to build and modernize over 6,000 public schools during the next two years. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, one-third of all schools, which serve 14 million students, need extensive repair. The U.S. General Accounting Office estimates that more than \$100 billion is needed to bring those classrooms into adequate condition. The Republican budget provides **no funding for school renovation** and actually guts current funding by allowing states to retroactively divert \$1.2 billion in 2001 school renovation funds to other education programs.